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PRESS RELEASE

Speed kills—especially children

U.S. Ambassador says over 200 children have died on Macedonia's roads because of speeding drivers

At an event marking the opening of a U.S.-supported pedestrian sidewalk and traffic light project, the U.S. Ambassador to Macedonia urged drivers to slow down, especially near schools.

"Two hundred young lives lost, leaving behind 200 families who will never recover from the shock of losing a child. All because someone was in a hurry to get somewhere," said Ambassador Gillian Milovanovic, referring to the fact that 200 Macedonian children have been killed by speeding drivers since 1993.

The Ambassador went on to point out that of the 200 children who have been killed, half were pedestrians, and that children are far more likely than adults to be killed in traffic accidents when they are innocently walking along the road than when they are riding in a car.

She congratulated the community of Staro Nagorichane, including the mayor, Vlasta Dimkovic, and the school board of Svetozar Markovic Elementary School for taking positive action to improve traffic safety. "You are a model for other communities," said the Ambassador. "You have proven that you care about the children of this community."

The Staro Nagorichane sidewalk and traffic light project was financed, in part, by the Municipal Good Governance Fund (MGGF) of USAID's Decentralization Project, which is designed to support Macedonian municipalities as they face the challenges associated with the decentralization process. USAID is part of the U.S. Mission in Macedonia. The project was a joint effort of the mayor, community groups and the school board of Svetozar Markovic Elementary School. Besides protecting school children, the sidewalk will also protect villagers and tourists who come to visit the church of St. Gjorgji.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The American people, through USAID, have invested more than \$450 million in Macedonia since 1993. More than 20 projects worth \$30 million a year are currently being implemented. These projects are designed to support Macedonia's transition to a free market-based, multi-ethnic democracy. They include initiatives to accelerate economic growth, develop democratic institutions, and educate citizens for a modern economy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>